

Threads of memory

BUSINESS
INDUSTRY

A second career is born through the preservation of a mother's memory

By Andria Farrell
ANFARREL@CNC.COM

Five years ago, Grace Healy's mother, Anastasia Morong passed away suddenly. Through her grief she found solitude in creating a quilt made out of her mother's clothing. Her quilt was just one step in her healing process. Her next adventure, to create a pillow with her mother's picture sewn onto the front gave Healy the keepsake she had been longing for - it also introduced the next chapter of her life.

Although, Healy had been caring for her sick mother for two years, her death was unexpected. She wanted to remember her mother and preserve as much of her life as she could. Her idea to create the pillow came from her years of sewing, and need to keep her mother close. A year after her mother's passing she made a picture pillow for her cousin who had lost his wife," everyone wanted one," she said.

Healy, a music teacher in the Boston Public School system for 36 years, knew she would be looking to retire in a few years. With some persuasion from her family and friends, and her love of sewing, she began planning her retirement.

"I knew I wanted to do something after I retired, and I wanted to do something I really loved, and I always loved to sew," Healy said. "How this started is inspirational to me, and I believe my mother guided me through the whole process. Everything evolved from making that one pillow in memory of my mother."

For the next five years leading up to her retirement, Healy created pillows and perfected her designs. She taught herself how to transfer photographs onto cloth, and then from there she created her pillows.

One of the friends suggested to Healy she should design pillows using nautical charts of Duxbury and the surrounding islands and areas. After doing research, she began creating the pillows. Her picture pillows then turned into nautical pillows, and from there her little business flourished.

The nautical pillows are made with Sunbrella material. Sunbrella fabric has a moisture, stain, and soil resistant finish; it is great for boats, homes, or patios. It has a manufacturer's guarantee for three years against loss of color or strength from normal conditions, such as sunlight, mildew, rot, and atmospheric chemicals.

Now Healy's picture pillow and nautical pillow designs have grown into a business that also involves picture and nautical candles and canvas bags. After showing off her merchandise at this year's Opening of the Bay sponsored by the Duxbury Bay Maritime School, she has been busy. And just recently her nautical pillows became a featured item at The Studio in Halls Corner. They are available in three styles for purchase at the shop, or by order.

Healy said her second career has also allowed her to fit into another part of her family. Her husband, Monty, is an assessor and works with maps for a living. Her daughter, Emelie, makes GPS maps for the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations in Rome.

"Making nautical chart pillows and bags has made me part of the family," she said with a smile.

Healy's business is much more than nautical pillows, and picture pillows, it a creation of keepsakes, chart designs, and gifts. Aside from her nautical designs, she makes pillows for all special occasions, from births, weddings, anniversaries and even pet pictures. "Picture Perfect" Pillows is now a custom designed pillow, canvas bag, and candle design business. She has taken her love of sewing, the memory of her mother, and the leisure of her retirement and created a work she loves to do and people love to receive.

Her word of mouth business has really kept her busy, and she owes it all to her mother.

"My mother led me to my second career," she said. "Making a quilt out of her clothes and a pillow in her memory, got me here."

For more information on "Picture Perfect" pillows by Grace Healy or to place an order, visit picturepillows.googlepages.com or e-mail picturepillows@gmail.com. Healy's nautical pillows are also on sale at The Studio in Halls Corner.



Grace Healy was inspired to begin "Picture Perfect" Pillows, after creating a quilt out of her mother's clothes and a pillow with her mother's picture on the front, as memory to her life.



PHOTOS/ANDRIA FARRELL

Grace Healy, creator of "Picture Perfect" Pillows, holds up one of her nautical chart designed pillows, on sale at The Studio in Duxbury.